

James Gillespie's High School



Newsletter

Message from the Head Teacher

November 2006

May I start by apologising for the absence of the October Newsletter. As you are probably aware through stories coming to you from the students, we went through a computer Refresh programme for much of the month. This threw our systems into temporary disarray and although we are still dealing with the issues emanating from this time, we are largely back to normal. Our telephone system which we realise is not good at the best of times also went down for two days. So we spent two days in not so blissful ignorance with no e-mail and no 'phones. I apologise for any inconvenience caused.

We are now into November, the fourth year prelims are in full swing, the weather has returned to its more usual gloom and we are looking forward to the various celebrations in December. The students are working very hard in preparation for the Usher Hall concert and our second CD is currently being recorded. You will be able to buy it at the concert.

You will also have received information from the students about our plans for November 30th, St. Andrew's Day.

The Scottish Executive has launched a major new campaign this year called "Celebrating Success" to encourage everyone in education "to join together and shout about the great things happening in our schools" (Peter Peacock, October 2006).

The Executive is also planning wider activities around St. Andrew's Day under the banner "One Scotland, Many Cultures".



We are a school which fits very neatly both banner headlines. We believe in celebrating success and we certainly typify "One Scotland, Many Cultures".

The idea is that everyone should wear something tartan to demonstrate the "One Scotland" theme. Students with cultural backgrounds from outwith Scotland should also be encouraged to wear something to show their bi- or multi-cultural background. This will demonstrate the "Many Cultures" theme.

In Gillespie's we will be celebrating success by our first to third year students walking with placards and banners made by them highlighting what they think is worthy of celebration. While the fourth and fifth year students will be doing Strip the Willow and Sixty Foursome Reels in the playgrounds. Let us hope the weather is kind.

I have also decided that we

use these as sponsored activities as a means of raising money for our school.

A target of £10,000 could be set. This would give us a fund (to be added to annually) to support a range of activities within the school that are not covered by funding we receive from the Authority, whether it is to support the Math's Challenge, environmental improvements, children who cannot afford to go on trips, group work for vulnerable youngsters or indeed further initiatives for staff welfare. The money would be for the benefit of all stakeholders.

I hope you will fully support this initiative. I think it would be an excellent annual fund which would benefit all of us.

Decisions about spending will be taken by a group including students, staff and parents. I trust you will continue to support us in our attempts to improve our marvelous school.



Mr. A. Wallace

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Special points of interest:

- ◆ JGHS is going to celebrate the success of our school with a series of events on 30th November. Read about it in the Head Teacher's message (page 1).
- ◆ Make sure you attend the PTA's Festive Fun event on Wednesday, 13th December at 19:00 hr. (see advertisement on page 2 for details).
- ◆ Stuck for Christmas presents? Why not buy your loved ones the latest, blockbuster CD from JGHS? They will be on sale at the Carol Concert being held in the Usher Hall on Thursday, 14th December. See page three for details about how to order your tickets for this sell-out event.

Headline News

Literary Success

For the second year in a row, Julia Rampen (S6) has been a winner in the Young Poets of the Year competition run by the Poetry Society, with her entry 'Swing Set'. This is a major achievement in what is a competitive national award. Julia will once again join 14 other winners in a week long writing course run by the prestigious Arvon Foundation. Julia also had a poem, 'Recycling', published in New Writing Scotland – she is probably the youngest person ever published in this journal. It is no exaggeration to say that Julia is probably the best teenage poet in Scotland. Both poems are printed below.

Mr. A. Crosbie (English Department)

Recycling

After the holiday, I recycle newspapers.
Shovelling past days into an iron abyss,
I find pages still chattering of yesterday
as I rewind time on its printed reels.

The world neatly encapsulated in ink;
I fold disasters in half, make them fit.
Tensions in Europe are scrunched and
a President blots in crescendos of rain.

Between a film star draped in dreams
and footballers scoring grainy goals
the child with no flesh tugs my second.
A baby whose cheeks have been stolen

by famine; whose black eyes have learnt,
at one, what I still don't know. How
terrifyingly beautiful those hollows, lips
and pupils perched on masking bone.

Julia Rampen S6.

Swing set

The garden constructed our swings; scaffolding
that once bespectacled the house became a skeletal
tent, spelling out an iron alphabet. A letter

for each of us. We kicked away the earth, tipped
the world on its axis of falling blue skies,
and hurled our heads against clotting clouds.

I flew up to places no adult could reach; mosaics
of leaves, sun drafting emerald light in a great
lace umbrella. The city of blackbirds. Then

fell like a heart so curls scratched grass; blades
and blue spirits in a tea party where every rule
was bone china. Shadows winging the lawn-

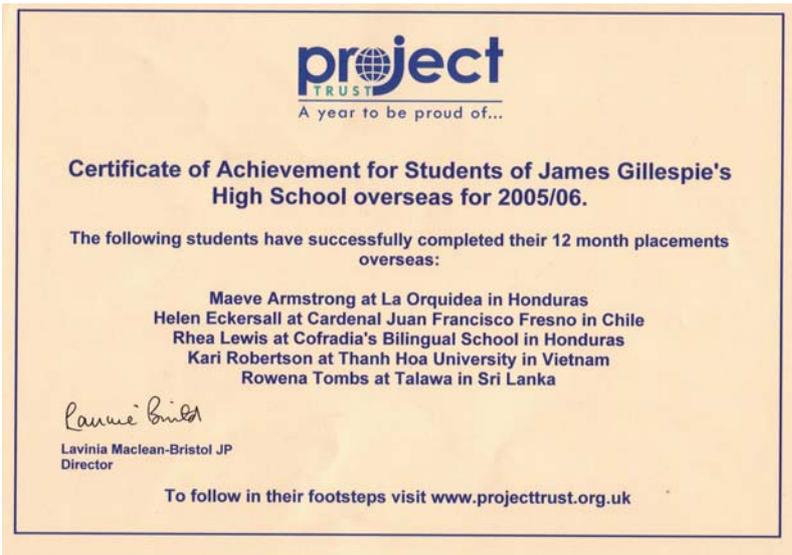
and up again. A rag doll of elements; winded
by air and aching sky, I'd see the street below
rearrange itself, and pause to catch my soul.

Julia Rampen S6.

Project Trust

Project Trust sends school leavers to spend a year overseas in their gap year. It is the only member of the Year Out Group of organisations sending only school leavers overseas, as opposed to graduates, and the only organisation offering in depth selection, training and debriefing as well as strong support overseas. Next year it will celebrate 40 years of sending young people abroad.

In the past year 12 of our former students have successfully completed 12 months with this project. The school has received this certificate to honour that achievement.



Project Trust hopes these former students will inspire others to follow in their footsteps. Places are still available for students wishing to leave next summer. More information can be found on their website (see certificate for URL).



Events

USHER HALL CAROL CONCERT
Thursday 14th December

Tickets for this event are now on sale!

Performance items include: senior and junior wind bands, string orchestra, guitar and clarsach ensembles, jazz band, percussion ensemble, flute ensemble, senior choir, senior vocal group, S2/3 choir and P7/S1 choir.

With around 600 pupils performing, this promises to be a fantastic night's entertainment – buy tickets now to avoid disappointment!

Tickets are available from the box office at the Usher Hall on: 0131 228 1155, or directly from their website: www.usherhall.co.uk where you can choose exactly which seats you would like.

'LIGHTING OF THE TREE' CEREMONIES

We are delighted to have been asked by both Tollcross Community Council and Marchmont and Sciennes Community Council to provide music for these ceremonies.

The groups performing are the brass quartet - who will be providing carols - and the pipe band.

Pupils involved are: Brass Quartet – Gwen Morris, Leo Rampen, Andrew Ellis and Sam Bradley

Pipe Band – Anand Bhopal, Iain Murray, Callum Barclay and Andrew Gray (all pipes) and Mark Edwards and Colin Hyson (snare and bass drum)

In addition, the senior vocal group will perform at the Marchmont and Sciennes ceremony.

Please support these groups and the school by joining in the ceremonies, which will certainly start off the Christmas atmosphere!

Tollcross ceremony: Tuesday 5th December at 6.00pm, by the

tree which is outside Scotmid on Warrender Park Road, (at the junction with Marchmont Crescent).

Marchmont ceremony: Saturday 9th December, by the tree which is at the foot of High Riggs, in front of the Bank building.

'THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS' CONCERT:

Friday 8th December 7.30 – 9.00pm

We are honoured to have a request for our senior wind band to perform at this event in aid of Muscular Dystrophy at St.Cuthbert's on Lothian Road.

This concert features celebrity readers and groups of a high calibre of performance, and we are delighted and proud to have been asked to contribute items by our wind band.

Once again, any support at this concert would be appreciated – you will also get a sneak preview of the band's items for the Usher Hall concert!

Tickets for this event are available directly from Margaret Tooth (Regional Officer of Muscular Dystrophy) on 01324 810958.

'COLIN O'RIORDAN TRUST CONCERT'

Congratulations to Takuji Usui in S2 who performed incredibly well at this concert on Saturday 4th December at St. Cecilia's Hall.

Takuji performed a set of Scottish pieces on the fiddle, and was one of only 11 pupils of outstanding ability who was asked to perform at this event.

Thanks to Takuji's teacher Yla Steven for all her hard work with him.

Well done Takuji!!



AND YET MORE.....!!

Just to let you know that 5 of our students are appearing in 'Songs of Praise' on Sunday 26th November.

They are all heavily involved in the National Youth Choir of Scotland who are currently celebrating their 10th anniversary.

The students involved are:

- ◆ Paul Grant
- ◆ Jessica Conway
- ◆ Zoe Barker
- ◆ Lois Jandoo
- ◆ Kirsty Main

Congratulations to them all for their commitment.

'FANFARE' AND 'CHILDLINE' CONCERTS

'Fanfare' Concert – Usher Hall:
Wednesday 22nd November at 7.30pm

'Childline' Concert –Usher Hall:
Monday 4th December at 7.30pm

The above concerts feature pupils across City of Edinburgh schools who participate in the many instrumental groups organised by the Arts and Learning Department.

We are fortunate that many of our talented pupils are committed to participating in these groups which rehearse weekly outwith school.

Please support the many pupils representing James Gillespie's High School at these concerts on the dates above, and a huge thank you to all instrumental staff at JGHS and pupils who are representing our school.

James Gillespie's High School

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JGHS Diary

Friday, 17th November 2006	S1 Progress Reports issued
Friday, 24th November 2006	S5/S6 Progress Reports issued
Monday, 27th November 2006	S5/S6 Parents' Consultation Evening
Thursday, 30th November 2006	St. Andrew's Day Celebration
Tuesday, 5th December 2006	School Board and PTA Meetings
Friday, 8th December 2006	S3 Progress Reports issued
Wednesday, 13th December 2006	PTA Festive Fun Event
Thursday, 14th December 2006	End of Year Concert, Usher Hall, 19:30 hr
Thursday, 21st December 2006	End of Term, School closes at 12:00 hr
Monday, 8th January 2007	Staff and Pupils Resume
Tuesday, 9th January 2007	School Board and PTA Meetings
Thursday, 18th January 2007	Parent Forum No. 3
Friday, 19th January 2007	S4 Reports Issued
Tuesday, 23rd January 2007	JGHS Trust Meeting
Wednesday, 24th January 2007	S4 Parent Consultation Evening
Friday, 26th January, 2007	PTA Burns Supper
Tuesday, 6th February 2007	School Board and PTA Meetings
Friday, 9th February 2007	Mid Term Holiday: School closes at 12:00 hr.
Monday, 19th February 2007	Staff and Pupils Resume
Tuesday, 20th February 2007	JGHS Trust Meeting

News Round-up

Space Cadets

Congratulations to Zoe Lawrence and Leo Rampen S5 who successfully completed a series of modules for Careers Scotland Space School. Leo will be attending a week's Space School in Glasgow along with NASA astronauts and scientists and Zoe will be travelling to Houston, Texas to spend a week at the Johnson Space Centre.

(Ms. A Lyall, Physics Department)

Music Successes

A big congratulations to Robbie Greig and Mairi MacPherson in S1 who achieved 2nd place and 3rd place respectively in the clarsach class at the National Mod in October. This event is attended by hundreds of very talented youngsters from all over Britain, and Robbie's and Mairi's performances

were outstanding.

Both scored very highly in their test piece – 'False are the Hearts of young Men' – and their own choice of piece.

Percussion Ensemble

Congratulations to our Percussion Ensemble - which consists of Mark Edwards, Jack Young, Sophie Wawro, Steven Kelly and Colin Hyson- who performed at St. Giles Cathedral on Sunday 5th November at an academic convention attended by many dignitaries including Roy Jobson.

They were hugely successful with the audience and many commented on how well they performed.

Thanks to all the pupils and for their conductor Alasdair Rankin, who gave up a Sunday to perform at this prestigious event.

(Ms. D O'Brien, Music Department)

CD Recordings

The last round of items being recorded for the CD will be for the choirs and jazz band on Friday 17th November, with timings as follows:

P7/S1 Choir	12.30pm
S2/3 Choir	1.45pm
Senior Choir	2.30pm
Senior Vocal Group	3.15pm
Jazz Band	4.00pm

The CD will also feature items from senior and junior wind bands, string orchestra, clarsach/guitar ensemble, percussion ensemble and flute ensemble which were all recorded the week-end of 28th October.

The CD will go on sale at the carol concert with all proceeds going directly to charity – more details will follow in the next newsletter.

University Successes

C Brown	B.Sc. Pure Science
J Coulson	Masters Degree in Chemistry (First Class)
R Hamilton	M.A. Geography (2:1)
J Raffel	Batchelor of Science in Medical Sciences (First Class)
J Shek	B.Eng. Computing and Electronics Engineering (2:1)

University of St. Andrews
University of Oxford
University of St. Andrews
St. Anne's College, Oxford
Heriot-Watt University